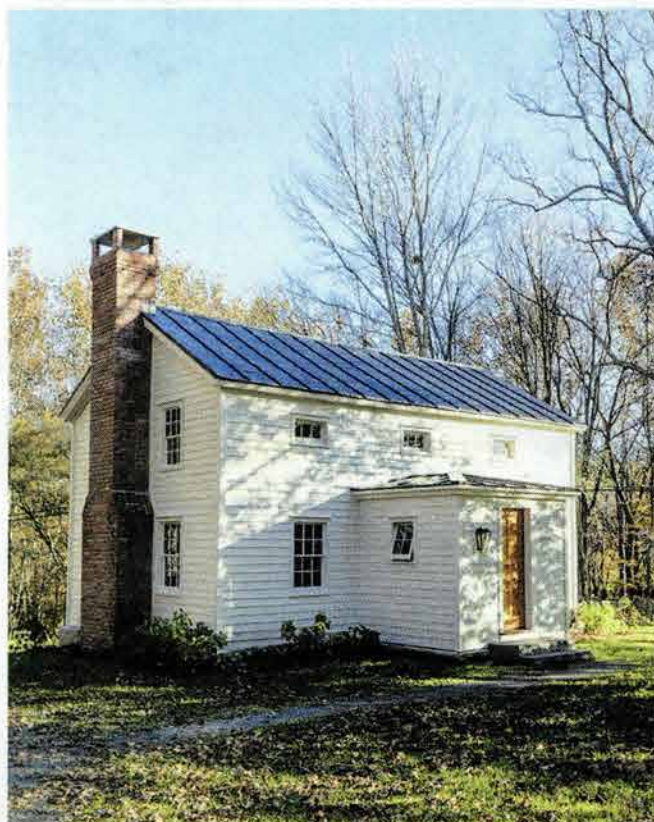


Arena

HIGHLIGHTS FROM TMAGAZINE.COM



BY DESIGN
Rural Idyll

For most couples, attempting a gut renovation of a historic home in a matter of months — while expecting twins — is a surefire recipe for disaster. But for Stefanie Brechbuehler and Robert Highsmith, the husband-and-wife co-founders of the Brooklyn-based design firm Workstead, the recent revamp of an 1850s residence in upstate New York not only presented them with a thrilling challenge, it also marked a celebratory homecoming after a few years spent living in the South.

“New York, for us, is a return to the foundation of where we started our company and started our design language and our work — and now our family,” Mr. Highsmith told me one recent sunny morning as we strolled through the lush grass that surrounds the charming two-story clapboard home, a former workman’s cottage perched high above the waters of the Roeliff Jansen Kill in Gallatin, N.Y. Ms. Brechbuehler added, “This is the first time that we were able to renovate something at the level of what we do for our clients, which is really exciting.”

The couple bought the five-acre property eight years ago, after getting married in nearby Ancramdale and falling in love with the region’s wildflower-dotted fields and forests. At the time, the house was plastered in asbestos shingles and 1950s vinyl flooring, with a marigold kitchen overrun by mice. But with Workstead’s growing list of custom interior projects and their development of a lighting collection keeping them busy in Brooklyn, they weren’t ready to undergo any major overhauls. So, armed with paint scrapers and plenty of enthusiasm, they got to work on the weekends, scrubbing, peeling and eventually coating everything in a palate-cleansing white.

In 2015, the couple decamped to Charleston, S.C., for a series of high-profile projects, including the interior design of the Dewberry hotel and a restoration of an 1853 Italianate Victorian rowhouse residence. Three years later, with their twin girls on the way, they decided to head back North, this time setting up residence full time in upstate New York. As Ms. Brechbuehler recalled with a smile, that was when they thought, “What better time than now to renovate the cottage?” *MIMI VU*



MATTHEW WILLIAMS AND JEFF HOLT (WORKSTEAD); FRANÇOISE GILOT (GILOT'S THE CONSTRUCTOR); ROBERT DOISNEAU/GAMMA-RAPHO/GETTY IMAGES; FRANÇOISE GILOT AND PABLO PICASSO



IN CONVERSATION

An Artist With No Regrets

The artist Françoise Gilot was only 21 when she met Pablo Picasso in 1943. In 1964, her book about a decade-long affair with him was a succès de scandale. Now, “Life With Picasso” is back in print. On a recent morning, I met with Ms. Gilot, 97, in her Upper West Side apartment, where she still paints. We discussed her memoir as well as her larger career. A show of her monotypes will go on view at the Mac-Gryder Gallery in New Orleans on Aug. 3. For the full interview, tmagazine.com.

THESSALY LA FORCE

One of my favorite sections of the book is the last chapter, which is about your decision to leave Picasso.

You think I remember what I wrote in the last chapter or even the first one? No, because I don’t spend my time looking at my own past. For me, I write it. When I write, I try to be as truthful as possible. Then, if I am done, I am finished. Why should I look twice?

I agree. But, there’s something he says to

you when you are parting ways, where he says essentially that you’re indebted to him. That life will never be as good without him. Do you want to say something for the record in response to that? You seem to have lived a great life after him.

We have only one life. You have to act your own deeds and your own life, either as a positive or a negative. It’s what it is.

In the book, André Gide says you are the kind of person who may have a lot of remorse but will never have regrets.

Why should I have regret? Regret is something you have not done. When I went away, I was through with that. That’s why I didn’t stay.

Yes, of course. That’s why I love the book.

I think it’s very important in life to have no regrets. “Regrets” meaning not having done this or that. Well, it’s much better to have done this or that, and, therefore, it had a result. That is the objective in real life, and then you cope with it as well as you can.

